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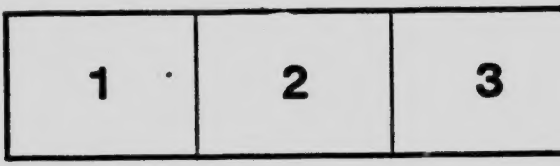

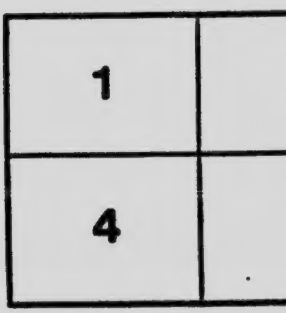

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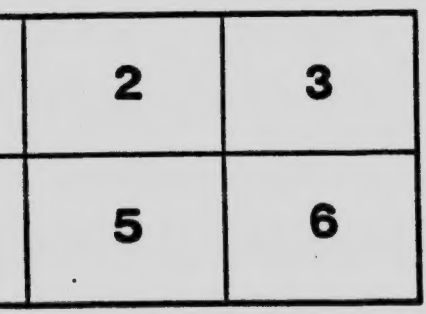

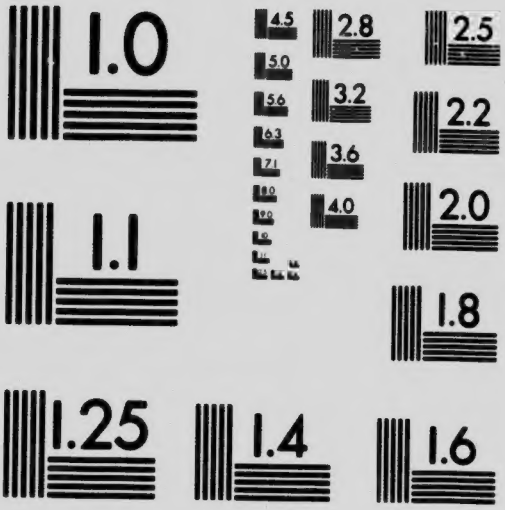

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"Is the Soul of a Jew worth $5,000?"

REPLY OF

REV. SABETI B. ROHOLD

Superintendent of Mission to the Jews
Presbyterian Church in Canada

TO

RABBI J. LEVIN

Of the Dagmar Street Synagogue, Winnipeg

THIRD EDITION

Published by the

JEWISH MISSION, PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH IN CANADA

165 ELIZABETH STREET, TORONTO, ONT.

PREFACE.

This leaflet is a reprint of a letter by Rev. S. B. Rohold, which appeared in "The Presbyterian" under date of April 28, 1910. It is a reply to a correspondent who was inclined to agree with a communication in the Winnipeg "Free Press News Bulletin" of April 12, from Rabbi J. L. Levin of the Dagmar St. Synagogue of that city. The letter has value because it is a satisfactory refutation of statements in the Rabbi's letter, that "converts to Christianity are of the ignorant class and from the lower strata of the Jewish people," that they do not change their faith "from conviction, but from the easy money that is in it," that afterwards they live on the charity of the mission, and that in any case they are such people as the Jewish community "is glad to be rid of."

As such statements are among the usual objections to Jewish Missions, this letter will have permanent value as a contribution to the literature of any Mission.

J. McP. Scott,
Convener Jewish Committee.

Toronto, May 5, 1910.

UNITED CHURCH
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Is a Jew's Soul worth $5000?

To the Editor of THE PRESBYTERIAN:

It was with much pain that I read the strictures of your Winnipeg correspondent with regard to my visit to that city.

The letter in the "Free Press" was all [illegible]ld expect from a misinformed and [illegible]oced Rabbi; but it came to me like a [illegible]ock to read that "your correspondent is inclined to agree with the Rabbi," and one would respectfully ask his consideration of the following facts:—

1. When I accepted the call of the Church to organize the work amongst the Jews, it was not a bargain "to make converts." The Church, obedient to the commands of her Lord "to preach the Gospel to every creature," and "to the Jew first and also to the Gentile," organized this work. Its success is well known.

2. It is surely rather late in the day to insinuate that Jews who become Christians do so from interested motives. The old tale that it cost $5,000 to convert a Jew has long ago been exploded. But let it be that a Jewish Mission has existed for a year and has cost, say, $5,000, and that only one Jew has been savingly converted, dare we put the question: "Is this result commensurate

with the labor and cost?" "Can we compare $5,000, or all the gold on earth, or all the material universe of God, with the value of one human soul, formed in the image of God, and capable of union and communion with him? But let us look at the facts. Your correspondent need not waste his energy in lamenting with the Rabbi "the waste of good money." We know of no such waste; on the contrary: Professor G. Deutsch, the great authority on Jewish History, and bitter opponent of all Jewish mission efforts, in the "American Israelite" of March 10th says: "The total number of apostasies from Judaism in Vienna during the year 1909 was 616, and the number of desertions for the last ten years has remained stationary. In a community that numbers about 180,000 souls this proportion of apostasies is not considered very great althoug' it is by no means insignificant. The former pretext that in this number there are included many outsiders who come to Vienna for the sake of conversion, in order to avoid notoriety at home, will not hold good any more, since the names of the apostates are published by the Jewish Press. One would think that it might be rather the reverse. The lists show that losses are found at both ends—amongst the most prominent and amongst the lowest strata of society. We find laborers and seamstresses by the side of lawyers and actresses and the representatives of high finance."

Let me give you another extract from the most prominent orthodox Jewish paper, the "Jewish Chronicle," of London, England: "Dr. Balu has examined the records of the Berlin Jewish community for information concerning Jewish apostasy. From this information it is possible to deduce a clear idea of the secession movement throughout the whole of Germany. . . . In the period of 1873 to 1906, 1,874 persons (1,395 males and 479 females) in Berlin seceded from Judaism. . . . Besides the moral damage which the Jewish community sustains by these conversions, it also suffers considerable material loss, through diminution of its tax-paying members. The seceders, as a rule, belong to the well-to-do classes, and pay high contributions. The annual loss to the Jewish community through the secession period, 1887 to 1906, was about 80,000 marks."

Reading this statement I fully appreciate the Rabbi's alarm, but not the fear of your correspondent.

The Jewish Year Book, printed in London, edited by Rabbi Isidore Harris, and read by all Rabbis, mentions the names of 500 Jewish celebrities, amongst whom are included eighty-five Jewish converts. Shall I say these great men, astronomers, scholars in Sanskrit, in Greek and Roman classics, in modern languages and literature, as well as in Arabic, Chaldee, Syriac and Hebrew, historians, poets, mathematicians, jurists,

architects, explorers, musicians, actors, critics, journalists and writers of all kinds, were hypocrites? If so, why does the editor of the orthodox Jewish Year Book glory in them?

Yet, I understand, the Jewish synagogue could not afford to brush aside, as of no account, a body of men which embraces persons like the three Herschells, the eminent astronomers; Jacobi, the mathematician; Sir F. C. Palgrave, the traveller and historian; I. Ricardo, the economist; F. Ganz, the jurist; Prof. F. Jaffe, the historian; Mendelssohn, Sir Julius Benedict and Sir M. Costa, the musicians; Sir Moses Salvador, H. Vamberg, the Halevys; not to mention Dr. Neander, the great Church historian; Dr. Alexander, first Anglican Bishop in Jerusalem; or saints like Dr. Saphir, Dr. Edersheim, Dr. Joseph Woolf, Bishop Hellmuth, or Bishop Schershewsky. But the Rabbi of Winnipeg says these men were lazy, fools or hypocrites who sold their souls for what they could get, and were a burden to the Church, and your correspondent seems ready to join in this terrible calumny.

Nay, these men have not only helped to add lustre to the Church, but by their lives, actions and writings have moulded the lives and character of hundreds within the Church.

...e assertion that the environment and condition of the Jewish community in Win-

nipeg are in such splendid order that there is no room for improvement is so ridiculous that I need not comment upon it. Had your correspondent been at the meeting of ministers and laymen, held in the College Board Room, he would have learned something of their moral and social condition that would have changed his opinion, as it certainly dims the Rabbi's self-glorification.

I am so glad that, as a rule, our ministers and laymen not only differ from your correspondent, but recognize the importance of this mission work. The Rev. A. McTaggart, whose church is in the Jewish quarter, said: "If it were only to teach these people to live a better and cleaner life, to become Canadians in spirit, we ought to send a missionary to them," and the unanimous and very favorable resolution passed at that meeting proved that those present were alive to the peril of neglecting the Jews.

Your correspondent's advice to give the money to Home Missions is the very first thing we have been advocating—to reach the Jews at home.

Yes, we are anxious that the Jew should become a good citizen, but this is not all. It is the imperative duty of the Church of Christ to preach to the Jews, as well as to all other races of mankind. In fact, the church exists, like her Master, not for herself but for mankind. To expect Christian people to exclude the Jew from their mission to evangelize the whole world, is to

expect the Church to undo herself. It is, sir, to ask Christian people to do what to them is an impossibility. The duty of the Christian is to proclaim peace through Christ. We cannot convert anyone; that is the prerogative of God's Holy Spirit, who alone can change the heart and life of a poor sinner.

The Rabbi's statements that "converts have to be supported, as they have no desire to work," is not only unfounded, but a hideous, criminal accusation. In our own mission, in the first year of our existence, we had six who openly confessed their faith in Christ by baptism, and all of them are a credit to the church of which they are members, and of service to the mission, from which not one of them receives any support.

As far as the charge of improving their condition is concerned, I do not know where it comes in, and I can assure you that many of us had to endure loss and suffer privations. Allow me to conclude with the words which I gave to a leading reformed Rabbi when he questioned me for leaving Judaism—though it is personal, I repeat it, for reflection has been cast on my character:

"I was born and brought up in Jerusalem, where my father for sixty years held a high rabbinical position. Having studied in the Jerusalem Yeshibas (Colleges), having been drunk with the fanatical traditions and perverted notions of orthodox

Judaism, filled with earnest zeal and the spirit of Rabbinism, hating the very name of Jesus, even persecuting His followers, yet by the grace of God I was found worthy of receiving that wonderful revelation of Christ Himself. The spirit of gratitude to my Redeemer demanded my testimony to others.

"Now after thirteen years of strenuous labor amongst my people, I try to gaze, from every standpoint and position, into the heart of my people's peculiar condition, and my testimony is unchangeable and without any qualification, that there is no other Hope but Jesus Christ, Israel's only and brightest hope."

It is ours to give them back the Christ whom they first gave to us, that they too may be able to say with us: "Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift."

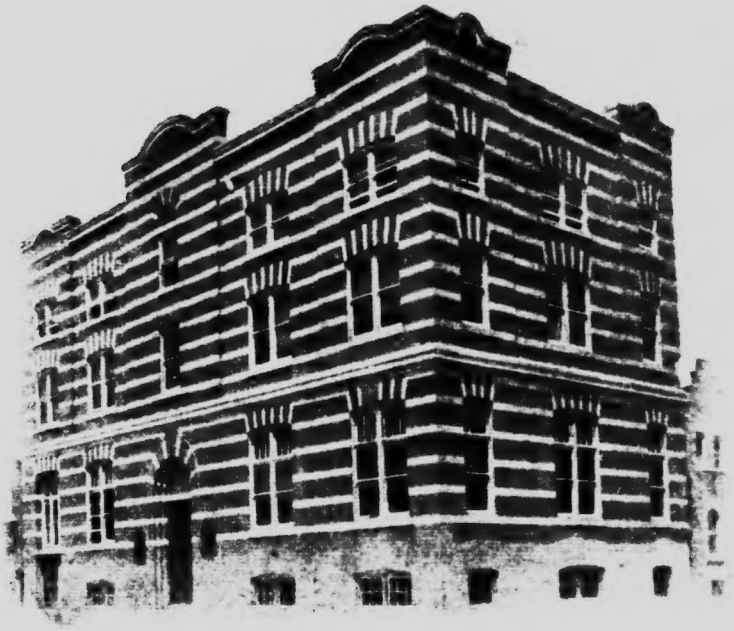
S. B. Rohold.

EDITOR'S COMMENT ON THE CORRESPONDENCE:

We were under the impression that our Winnipeg correspondent's references to the Jewish Mission would hardly go unnoticed. Mr. Rohold has taken pains to reply to them at considerable length. With all due respect to our esteemed Winnipeg correspondent, we think he is fairly answered.—"The Presbyterian," April 28, 1910.

בית בשורת המשיח לבני ישראל

The House of Good Tidings of the Messiah of the Children of Israel.



Christian Synagogue, north-east corner of Elm and Elizabeth Sts.

MISSION TO THE JEWS

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN CANADA.

REV. S. B. ROHOLD, Superintendent,
165 Elizabeth Street, Toronto.
Phone Main 6645.

A Mission to the Hebrew People of Canada under the administration of the Board Home Mission Committee.

TORONTO JEWISH PRESBYTERIAN MISSION.

This is a strong and well organized mission to the 32,000 Jewish people in Toronto. The Mission is to be extended to other parts of Canada as needs may require and as the means may warrant.

The Mission premises are in the heart of the Jewish quarter, and aggressive work is carried on.

Mr. Rohold is prepared, as the claims of his other work will allow, to give lectures, illustrated by lantern slides from original views, and by curios, upon Palestine and Jewish life and customs.

In order to reach effectively the home and life of the whole Jewish family, the following departments have been organized, touching (as we have calculated) the whole of the family life: Reading Rooms; Night Schools, for men and women; Sewing Classes for women and girls; Sabbath School; Boys' Club and Manual Training; Boy Scouts; Nursery; Tract Distribution; Gospel Services; Bible Classes; Open Air Services; Free Dispensary; Systematic visitation of houses, shops, hospitals and other institutions; dealing with individuals; endeavoring to find employment for the unemployed. The missionary is accessible to all.